

SOMERVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

Location: Virtual meeting via GoToWebinar

Date: January 19, 2022

Time: The Chair convened the meeting at 5.30pm.

ATTENDANCE:

SRA Members Present: Iwona Bonney, Phillip Ercolini, Ben Ewen-Campen, William Gage, Patrick McCormick, Christine Stone.

SRA Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Eileen McGettigan (Special Counsel), Tom Galligani (Director of Economic Development), Rachel Nadkarni (Senior Planner), Ted Fields (Senior Planner).

AGENDA ITEMS:

Staff presented virtual meeting house rules to the Board.

1: Approval of December 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Bonney moved approval. Seconded by Mr. Gage. Unanimously approved 6-0-0 by roll call vote.

2: Public Comment:

- None.

3: 90 Washington Street Update:

- The Chair elected to take this item out of order.
- Ted Fields provided an update. The City hosted a Public Listening Session on December 13, 2021. This was a hybrid meeting with 120+ attendees. Staff is synthesizing the feedback for use in upcoming public engagement events and planning exercises.
- There are four upcoming milestones in the planning phase of the project– a design charrette for staff and consultants on January 20th, a Building Committee meeting on February 2nd, a facilitated discussion between the City, Defund Somerville and Cobble Hill Apartment residents (to be scheduled ASAP), and a second Public Forum on February 16th, 2022.
- Mr. Ewen-Campen asked if the design charrette on January 20th is open to the public. Mr. Fields and Mr. Galligani confirmed it was for staff and consultants only, but the information generated will be incorporated into the February 16th meeting. Mr. Ewen-Campen also asked if the YMCA was being considered in the discussions over potential uses at 90 Washington. Mr. Fields confirmed that a YMCA or similar community facility was mentioned as a potential use at the Washington Street Development Parcels at the December 13th public meeting and will likely be mentioned at the second listening session on February 16th.
- Mr. Gage asked if he and other SRA members could be notified about the second public meeting on February 16th. Mr. Fields assented.
- Mr. McCormick asked about learning more about the letter sent by Special Counsel to Corcoran-Jennison's counsel on January 12th, 2022. Ms. McGettigan responded that she wrote the letter at the request of City staff who were prevented from accessing the residents at the Cobble Hill Apartments, and who learned about an apparent "disinformation campaign" being waged by Corcoran-Jennison among the residents of the complex. Mr. Galligani confirmed that the City hosted a lunch for Cobble Hill residents at the nearby Ralph & Jenny Center to provide accurate information about the project to

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Cobble Hill tenants and local residents.

- No public comment was received on this item.

4: Boynton Yards Update:

- Ms. Nadkarni noted that the Board owns South Street, and that she wished to update the Board that the City must change the direction of South Street along a short stretch between Harding and Hunting Streets to one-way, eastbound.
- Mr. Gage asked about the impacts on traffic flow in Union Square and Medford Street during evening peak hours. Ms. Nadkarni responded that the proposed change should reduce traffic during evening peak hours.
- Building One is open and tenants are moving in. Ground floor activation should start in the spring. Preparations are underway to start construction on Building Two, and the Master Plan Special Permit is being amended to allow for a construction of a third lab building on the site.
- No public comment was received on this item.

5. Union Square Update:

- Mr. Galligani provided a short briefing. The MBTA station is expected to be operational in March. The SRA's development partner, US2, is continuing progress on the residential tower and is near to finishing the foundation of the lab building. They could be starting vertical construction in a few months.
- The historic Union Square fire station will also be redeveloped soon. The building is part of the Union Square Urban Renewal area and requires major repairs to be fit for occupation. The City issued an RFP for a partner to restore the building back in the summer and is considering a proposal to renovate the structure and occupy it with a community-oriented use.
- No public comment was received on this item.

6. Winter Hill Update:

- Ms. Nadkarni informed the Board that progress is being made in forming a Civic Advisory Committee, as required by the area's Urban Renewal Plan. Candidates have been interviewed, selections are being finalized and we hope to have them start meeting in February.
- A member of the public asked about where the City was with the firm, Mark Development, slated to develop the 220 Broadway site. This developer has an option to purchase the site from the current owner and has worked with the Ward Councilor to pass a zoning change to permit a mixed-use project on the parcel. Mark Development has also worked with area residents for the past six months to shape the project. The City is waiting for Mark Development to fine tune their proposal and make an application to the Planning Board.

7. Assembly Square Update:

- Mr. Galligani informed the Board that the Assembly Square Neighborhood Plan was submitted two months ago, and the public comment period has been extended until the end of the month.
- Bluebird Bio is renting 60,000 square feet in the Puma Building at 455 Grand Union Street. Uplight and Spark Charge are also renting space in the property. Mr. Ercolini asked what these firms do. Both are tech firms. Spark Charge makes specialized batteries for charging electric cars. Ashley Furniture and SavMor Liquors are also opening in the development.

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Eight to ten retail tenants will also locate in the area in the spring.

- Ms. Stone asked whether Bluebird Bio was renting lab or office space at Assembly. 455 Grand Union Street is strictly an office building, with no lab space.
- No public comment was received on this item.

8. Other Business:

- Ms. McGettigan informed the Board that elections for officers should be held at the next meeting (February 16, 2022).
- No public comment was received on this item.

Meeting Adjournment:

Mr. McCormick moved to adjourn at 6:08pm. Ms. Stone seconded. The motion was unanimously approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote (Mr. Ewen-Campen had to leave the meeting at 6pm to attend another City meeting).